

1984

RESOLUTION: GENETIC DISEASE AND GENETIC ENGINEERING

WHEREAS, we know that the welfare of individuals in future generations is a high concern of peoples of all races, nations and creeds; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the Gospel requires affirmative action by Christians to serve the less fortunate, including particularly those who by reason of their genetic inheritance face early death, prolonged pain and suffering or great physical or intellectual disadvantages; and

WHEREAS, we believe also that God is working God's purpose out in enabling people to treat and prevent disease; and

WHEREAS, we realize that in science and technology there is immediate potential for treatment of genetic disease, and in the foreseeable future for prevention of genetic deficiencies in succeeding generations; and

WHEREAS, we realize also that in science and technology there is potential for hurt as well as help for present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, knowing that scientists in other nations are advancing knowledge of molecular biology and genetic engineering and are applying that knowledge and the resulting medical technology to benefit humans suffering from genetic defects; and

WHEREAS, desiring that citizens, scientists and institutions of the United States contribute substantially, in proportion to their knowledge and vast resources, to the treatment and prevention of genetic diseases; and

WHEREAS, trusting in the people and the democratic institutions of government in the United States to monitor and regulate such science and technology:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 1984 annual meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ in Connecticut do hereby resolve and urge that

I. The Legislative and Executive branches of the United States government through their agencies and commissions

(a) closely monitor molecular biological science and genetic engineering as applied or applicable to humans, and simultaneously facilitate public dissemination of knowledge of such science and engineering and its application to living organisms,

(b) adequately fund and otherwise facilitate and advance research into the understanding, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of genetic disease, including particularly (i) treatment through replacement or transformation of somatic cells and (ii) prevention by transformation of germ cells.

2. The Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference form a Task Force to study and report on current ethical questions involving research in molecular biology and genetic engineering as related to human genetics, such Task Force to include clergy, scientists skilled in molecular biology and human genetics, ethicists, physicians with practices involving genetic diseases and human reproduction, and the laity of our churches.

3. The Task Force and designated officers of the Connecticut Conference closely follow developments in genetic science so as to encourage those endeavors and to be able to counsel knowledgeably with respect to ethical questions.